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The Commercial Nomad

By BOB TAYLOR



Buy it, or miss a good thing. A grin on every page.

THE COMMERCIAL NOMAD

The Humor, Sentiment and Philosophy
of a Travelling Man.

BY
BOB TAYLOR



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R. J. TAYLOR
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Aug. Dec. 16, 1918



Fraternally yours
Bob Taylor

—‡ Introduction ‡—

To Drummers, Commercial Travellers and
Ambassadors of Trade :



SOME of my friends insist that I am a poet and suggest that if I had been born in Shakespeare's time, Bill never would have become famous.

Others pay me a dubious compliment by saying that there is more truth than poetry in what I write; still others that I have the meat at the expense of the metre.

However these things may be, if the stuff I turn out is poetry, then I have discovered the immortal secret of why a poet wears long hair. There's not enough in it to pay the price of a hair cut.

Here's hoping you fellows will cough up enough to pay the publisher's bill.

Fraternally yours
Bob Taylor

THE DRUMMER'S PHILOSOPHY

The average travelling salesman of to-day is a man who has acquired his education in the school of adversity and hard knocks. Most of us can stand a day or so of no business—commonly called a skunk—and take it cheerfully, but let that day or so extend to three or four and his philosophical smile will change into a sickly sort of grin. The following incident happened to me in February of “the panic” in a little town in Tennessee, just as I was reaching the sickly grin stage. I should explain that the mule’s victim is a New York salesman, a fine fellow, a popular member of the U. C. T., and to-day a personal friend of mine. I have to apologize to him for putting him in the Tennessee idiom.

Ever get disgusted, neighbor,
With conditions generally?
Here’s a little object lesson,
Happened down in Tennessee.

Scene: a dead old-fashioned hamlet—
You all know the kind I mean,
Where the chief illuminating
Is all done with kerosene.

Where hotel accommodations
Are but relics of the past,
And you find but small protection
From the Winter’s biting blast.

Where the grub is everlasting,
Indigestible and tough,
By the time you’ve chewed a mouth-
ful,
You’ve decided that’s enough.

It was dark—just black as midnight,
When I hit that little town,
And the wind was wildly howling,
While the rain came pouring down.

Underfoot the mud was frightful,
Slimy, sloppy, slushy, cold,
And I longed for home and dear
ones,
With a longing that’s untold.

Times were hard and getting harder,
Nothing doing anywhere,
Prospect looked reverse of cheerful,
Like a dismal, grim nightmare.

My vocabulary’s useless
For the picture I would paint,
’Twas a trying situation
For the temper of a saint.

I was blue and getting bluer
As I walked to that hotel,
Which looked almost as inviting
As a gloomy prison cell.

There I met a sight that thrilled me,
Fascinated, held me fast,
I forgot my little troubles
They dissolved, vamoosed and
passed.

A dilapidated looking
Person opened wide the door,
Bandaged up in ghastly fashion,
Thought he'd been through some
great war.

He looked tough and well he knew it,
Knew his features were a joke,
Knew that I could not admire him,
Caught my curious look and spoke.

'That thar' bandage, stranger, covers
Up the scars of a great duel,
Got 'em in a disputation,
With the hind part of a mule.

A right smart cantankerous critter,
A great kicker and a biter,
Had a local reputation
Among mules as a prize-fighter.

Seemed to me he didn't fancy
My personal appearance
From the start, and failed to hanker
For more intimate acquaintance.

Things kep' growing worse and
worse,
I jest knowed the time would come
When I'd give that mule the licking
He deserved, but say! by gum!

'Stead of him 'twas me that got it,
And he soaked me mighty bad,
Smashed my nose and broke my jaw
bone,

What a kick that fool mule had,

Thought I'd had my share of mis'ry
Long 'afore I got that lick,
But a fellow don't know trouble
Till he gets a good mule's kick.

You ain't none too cheerful stranger,
'Pears to me, you're looking blue
Up agenst it? well! that's nothing,
Son, thar' ain't no mule kicked you."

I admitted that my troubles
Were but small and I could see
That like other human beings
I'd been kicking thoughtlessly.

Kicking just from force of habit
For quite frequently I find
Trouble merely superficial,
Just existing in the mind.

Seemed to me I'd been complaining
Without cause, and there I vowed
I would seek the silver lining
That exists in every cloud.

I grinned broadly as I left him,
Grinned because his words were true,
Now I echo when despondent,
"Son, thar' ain't no mule kicked you."

When you think your tribulations
So much greater than your neighbor's
Look around, you'll stop your whin-
ing
And be satisfied with your's.

THE DRUMMER'S READY LETTER WRITER

I started travelling about fourteen years ago, and in that time I have had a considerably varied experience with quite a number of different houses. One question that frequently mystified me was why so many different firms selected a man for sales manager who was absolutely ignorant of the game, and who knew so little about actual sales that he couldn't graduate in a kindergarten class of salesmanship. I have worked under a number of those and have received a number of fool letters that I have answered to the best of my ability. I submit a few illustrations and agree to waive the copyright on any of them to any salesman who cares to use them in correspondence with his house. At one time I found myself in Bangor, Maine, and expected in about ten days' time to make a trip to Canada, so I wrote for a check to be sent me to Portland. Here's the gem I received in reply to my letter :

Dear Sir:—

Just received your letter from Bangor, Me., in which you state that your address will be Portland till April 17th. You wrote your letter on the 19th. This is twist number one; you seem to be twisted so much that we are unable to get at the meaning of your remarks with the combined help of all the large heads in the place.

Yours very truly.

Now, granted I had made an error in my dates, he knew his letter would reach me, and if it did then why wouldn't I have received the check also, but the chump had failed to enclose it. No initials on it, but I surmised at once who had written it and replied as follows :

Dear Sir:—

Just received a brilliant sarcastic letter, no initials as to who dictated it, but I presume it was a creation of your wonderful mind, for surely any one—whose travelling experience extended beyond a daily trip to Brooklyn and

back—would understand and appreciate the difficulty of cashing a check when in strange territory. Is it any wonder that the average stenographer has a weary look and that her life is short when she has to write such a lot of rot as I received, when you could have dispensed with it all by sending a sensible check? My address will be Concord, N. H., till the 30th.

Yours very truly.

I received my check at Concord with no superfluous inanities attached.

Another manager told me that I wrote the most insulting letters that they received from any of their men. I told him the easiest way to dispose of that would be to stop writing himself, and then he wouldn't put me to the painful necessity of writing back again; just let me know any time my work proved unsatisfactory, and I wouldn't worry them an extra minute, because, I said, if you write me some foolish advice or indulge in unnecessary criticism, and I receive your letter at a time when my liver is sluggish and I have a dark brown taste in my mouth, you will surely hear from me. One time he wrote, "Your incidental account is altogether too high and we want it itemized more carefully." I replied:

Dear Sir:—

The chief item in my incidental account is cigars. I find I can do much more effective work while chewing on the butt of a "five" and enviously watching the other fellow spoil the look of a "ten," than I can do in any other manner.

Yours very truly.

At another time he sent me a lot of little blanks to fill in, on which I was to make notes concerning every man I called on. I replied briefly that life was altogether too short. He wrote again, "We would like to have you fill in these blanks, all our other men are doing it, and we know of no reason that would justify us in excusing you." I replied, "Josh Billings said 'A man wot kan ware a paper kollar fore a hole week and keep it klean ain't good for nuthin' else.' You probably have some stars at filling in blank reports, how about the orders they get for you?"

He came back again, "We'd still like you to fill in these blanks." This time I answered at length as follows:—

Dear Sir:—

Some of the large red-tape corporations insist upon these daily reports, but you'd meet a whole lot of their men before you would pick out a salesman. I can imagine one of these fellows receiving an answer to his daily report, it would probably read as follows:—

Dear Sir:—

We have your letter of the 12th before us. We notice it was mailed at 8 P. M., which seems to indicate to us you must have quit work quite early that night. You got up at 6.30, took your monthly bath, had your semi-weekly shave, breakfasted, and started in plugging for us at 8.30. Would it not be to our mutual advantage for you to start in at half-past seven? We think you could be of service to your prospective customer, in opening his mail or helping the nigger to sweep up. We have you spotted up to 12.15, and land on you again at 12.45, but what the dickens were you doing in the meantime? If this was your lunch time we would suggest that you devote considerably less time to it, as half an hour in the middle of the day is altogether too much time to take up over such a trivial thing as eating. You were a nickel short in your expense report for week ending the 8th. We are inclined to think that you are taking advantage of our laxity in this department and that you squandered that five cents on your weekly chewing gum, although you are well aware that we cut out that item at our last quarterly meeting. We have this nickel charged up to you at six per cent. We notice you only sold a thousand dollars yesterday; is there any reason why this should not have been fifteen hundred? Trusting that in the future your orders will be larger, and that you will not waste too much of the firm's time in sleep. We remain,

Yours very truly.

(Then I wound up my letter with)

Trusting this will find you in a perfect state of health, and continually adding to your little pile of wealth. I remain,

Yours very truly.

R. J. Taylor.

Then the boss came in; he was a pretty good fellow, and a pretty good letter writer. He came back at me with:

In the limited time at the writer's disposal, I manage to read between the lines of your long letter an emphatic refusal to fill in blank reports, and your refusal is duly registered; but it seems to us—in the length of time it must necessarily take you to write these lengthy epistles—you could easily find time to fill in these insignificant blanks of ours.

Yours very truly.

The Pearline people wrote their salesman to go to the town of Texline, a small place on the border of Texas and New Mexico. He didn't want to go, and tried to get out of the trip, but they insisted and he went. This is the style of letter he is reported to have written:

Gentlemen:—

At your suggestion I went to the town of Texline. I found there a barnlike structure—an apology for a hotel—with an old black cat with tears in his eyes sitting on the stoop, two stores, seven saloons, and eight windmills. The windmills were doing all the business. I have now cut out Texline.

Yours very truly.

The following is credited to a Fairbank's man.

It seems they sent one of their best men to work in Texas. He fell off the water wagon, and did his best to deplete the saloons of their stock of liquor. Fairbanks heard nothing from him for several days. Being a valuable man, they didn't like to roast him, but they finally wired him: "K——, are you working?" and he wired back, "No, let the Gold Dust Twins do your work."

A salesman travelling for the leading fountain pen manufacturers went astray in Memphis, Tenn. Literally he went on a jag and kept it up for a week. They finally lost all patience with him and telegraphed him to ship his samples back at once. He wired back, "How can I do any business without my samples?"

THE END OF THE TRIP

No explanation of the following will be necessary to the salesman accustomed to long trips. For the benefit of the others, though, I will explain that towards the end of a three or four months' trip the man with any home ties at all gets nervous, restless and anxious to get home again. He figures up very carefully some seven or eight towns that he feels morally bound to make in winding up his trip. As he draws near the first one, he says to himself, "Well, I never did get much business in that town anyway, I believe I'll cut it out." He does, works about three of the important towns he had decided on and jumps home. Towards the end of a seventeen weeks' trip I picked up a souvenir card illustrating a fellow on horseback, with the words, "Watch me on the home stretch." It suggested the following, which I wrote on the back and mailed to my wife.

Watch me on the home stretch

Boys, I'm going home,

Troubles all behind me,

No more this trip I'll roam.

Don't talk to me of business

Or hard luck yet to come,

I've just one thought—I'm thinking

Of the wife and kid at home.

Go through your stock of phrases,

And fine adjectives—there's none

To describe the inner feelings

Of the drummer going home.

Just one thing interests me,

It's an all absorbing one,

But I hardly think you'll blame me ;

Just think—I'm going home.

SOLILOQUY

(On a tough week's work.)

Well! I don't know!
I used to think
That I knew all there was to know
About this game of selling goods;
But lately, say!
The painful way
In which they've turned me down
Is most monotonous—
I've worried heaps,
And fancy now
I'm down and out for keeps.
I know that worrying's useless,
And I know
If I indulge in such a senseless pastime
I'll lose my sleep,
And p'raps I'll weep
Like any two year old.
I must admit
That times are bad,
Still, I don't get my share of what there is
It seems to me,
And I can see
That everybody knows
I've lost my grit,
I'd better quit,
I've joined the D. and O's.
Yet after all
Perhaps the best thing I can do
Is just to keep a good stiff upper lip
And leave all worrying to the boss;
For surely I
Can stand it if he can,
So now I'll try
To be a man
Again, and once again begin
To meet these troubles
With my old-time grin.

DOUBLING UP

No travelling salesman requires an explanation of the above title. Two beds in a room, reduced accommodation, but never a reduction in price.

It's an imposition that we cannot help, and seems to be a little game that is altogether too frequently worked. A friend related a little experience of his to me only the other day as follows:—"I found myself in a small town in South Carolina recently where the hotel was crowded. A bunch of us fellows stood at the desk waiting for our rooms, only to be told the place was full and there was nothing left but double rooms.

"I was a stranger to the boys; they paired off together, and I drew a tough looking guy for mine. Coarse hair, dirty in appearance, a regular thug to look at him, and he had me nervous. When we reached our room I tried to size up the situation, because on closer acquaintance he didn't seem to improve a little bit.

"I asked him what business he happened to be engaged in, and he replied, 'I'm not in business, my friend.'

"Then I thought he might be a gambler or professional crook. Tried him again, and then brought out the information that he was studying for the ministry at the little hamlet of Due West. He brought out his Bible, read for a while and said his prayers. I went to sleep and slept like a lamb."

I landed in a town in New Mexico one night only to find the hotel crowded and nothing left but double rooms. I told the proprietor that I didn't like the look of the crowd, cowboys, ranchmen and so forth, and that I wouldn't double with any of 'em, but would go to the other hotel (both of them good ones). I knew him pretty well, and he replied, "Oh! don't throw me down, Taylor, I can't help it; pick out somebody and help me out; there's a man from New York right behind you." Well, I sized him up; he looked all right and we went to our room. It seemed my partner had had a long ride

and wanted to take a bath, but when he inquired for a bath room the proprietor informed him that the only bath tub in the house was in number twenty-seven; the occupant of that room had retired, but he would call him for his bath early in the morning. He did, next morning at dawn; it was a raw, cold morning, just light enough to see it snowing outside, when with a rap at the door somebody announced that my friend's bath was ready. He jumped out of bed, got hurriedly into his clothes and accompanied his guide to room number twenty-seven. In a few minutes he was back again, filling the air with anathema. He got off a few exclamations, interjections and expletives, and then, when cooled off a little—and it didn't take long in that cold room—he proceeded to explain. "Now what do you think that son of a gun did? Pulled me out of bed on a cold morning like this, took me to twenty-seven, said 'Here's the bath room, sir,' walked away, came tiptoeing back and said, 'I forgot to tell you there was no hot water.' I told him that was all right, I'd take a cold bath. He walked away, and while I was still fumbling with the lock tiptoed back again and whispered, 'I forgot to tell you there is no cold water, sir.' Now, what the ——— ——— ———"

I saw a funny stunt only this trip in Del Rio, Texas. A travelling man came into the hotel office, made a few mystic passes at a chair with his hat, and the inanimate thing hopped across the room in any direction he indicated—following his hat—in the most grotesque and laughable manner. Don't ask me how he did it; I didn't get next to the trick. He said that on one occasion he landed in a hotel only to find it crowded, nothing left but a double room, with one occupant already in it. He went to the room, and the other fellow half rose in his bed with the remark, "Well, it's a long time since you and I had the same room together, isn't it?" He replied, "Yes! I don't know whether I'm going to sleep in the same room with you or not, but I'll soon find out. This chair will reveal it: if you're all right it will come towards me." It did, and he said, "Well, you're all right, we can share the same room together." The other fellow stared wild eyed for a minute, got up, grabbed his clothes and remarked, "Well, sport, it might be all right for you, but I'm a son of a gun if this is a healthy place for me." He then left the room and bunked all night on the veranda.

THE TRAVELING MAN

"The Travelling Man" was suggested to me by the numerous suspicious people who are so prone to criticise others. The most ignorant can criticise and criticism is frequently the sign of ignorance.

You speak of the traveling man with a sneer,
And discuss all his faults pro and con,
You're only too willing to listen, I fear,
To gossip of mischievous tongue,
With a low whisper here, and a grin there, alas!
She's a vicious, malicious old dame,
For people who live in houses of glass,
Throwing stones is a dangerous game.

She insinuates things that have venomous stings,
But are sadly lacking in truth,
With countenance grim and a bearing that's prim,
She will talk of the follies of youth;
And the sailor—a wife in each port on the shore—
But he's not half as bad as he's painted,
For with one black sheep in a thousand or more,
Would you call the whole flock tainted?

With chuckles of glee, all his faults she will see,
But never a virtue detect,
With clear demonstration, by her calculation.
She's certainly of the elect.
With suggestion that's sly, hypocritical sigh
And many a dismal groan,
She'll discover the mote in her brother's eye,
But will miss the beam in her own.

You've heard of Joseph and Potiphar's wife,
How she tried to tempt him to sin,
It happened but once to Joe in his life,
But with us it's the usual thing.
In remote days of old—in the Book we are told—
One who battled through life all alone;
Who knew human nature, invited the pure
To come forward and cast the first stone.

You remember the sequel, none there proved equal,
And none qualified for the test,
And he of the clan of the travelling man
Will average up with the best.



Some fellows resent the appellation "Drummer," think it is not dignified enough and would much prefer being called "Commercial Traveller." Personally—if they'll only give me the business—I'm very indifferent as to what they call me, but there are two classes and I have noticed a distinct difference. The "Drummer" eats with his knife.

My personal definition of a commercial traveller is that he is a thick-headed idiot, who has so little sense that he is unable to make a decent living at home, and so he travels for it. Don't contradict me, I know from personal experience; ninety-nine out of a hundred of us would quit travelling if we could, but the prospect of smoking nothing but cheap cigars never did appeal to me.

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SELLING GOODS IN ENGLAND

About twelve years ago I had my first experience in England as "Commercial." There are no "Drummers" over there they are all "Commercials."

I went over on a vacation and met R. H. Ingersoll of dollar watch fame in London. He told me he had just made an arrangement with a German commission agent to introduce his watches in England, and suggested as I had a thorough knowledge of the line, that I should work there for a couple of months. The German nearly had a fit when he heard the salary I suggested, it seemed that ten dollars a week was considered very fair pay. We finally made a deal by which I was to draw a salary satisfactory to me, and also have a bonus commission allowance on the goods sold. The German suggested that I wear a silk hat and Prince Albert coat, such as their regular men wore, but I reneged at that, told him I objected to making a guy of myself, and as I was very indifferent about the job he soon gave in. He seemed to think that it would be to my advantage to be introduced to the City trade by their regular City salesman.

I told him I had no objection, provided that he behaved himself, so we started out together. My companion was a work of art, silk hat and so forth, he was faultlessly arrayed, reminded me of the pictures we see in tailor's advertisements, but so seldom see in real life. He was simply immaculate, almost forgot he was only a salesman, and thought I must look like a porter carrying his sample case.

At that stage of the game I had only had about three years' experience. I was looking for all the knowledge I could get, and invariably watched the methods and address of the different men with whom I came in contact. Apparelled as he was, I expected he would prove to be a star salesman, and hoped I'd be able to learn something from him, but what a disappointment

He would walk into a store, make a most elaborate bow, and present his card to the buyer, invariably with the words: "Ah! good morning, sir, I represent Miller & Co. sir." The buyer would reply:

"Oh! you do? Well! we won't want anything today."

"All right sir, good day, sir," and he was gone, sir.

He could write out a mail order all right, and his very presence might suggest a man's wants to him, as for instance; one morning a merchant asked him the price of a thousand gross of tea spoons. He gave him the figure, and the dealer told him to ship them.

Phlegmatic in temperament, he wrote the order down, as though it had'nt got the slightest interest to him, order or no order, he would get his little two pounds at the end of the week and there his interest began and ended.

I found later that his system was all according to Hoyle. The other salesmen I met all had the same stereotyped line of talk, just order takers, they seemed to have very little idea of salesmanship, or creating a demand where none had existed. My chief business was to introduce the famous dollar watch in that country. At that time, it was neither famous nor much of a watch. It was as big as the top of a tea cup, and looked like a coat pocket edition of an alarm clock, but evolution has improved it so that to-day it is a staple commodity and an easy seller. It was anything but an easy seller in those days, however, and to help pay expenses I had with me a line of Yankee notions. A dollar typewriter, toy sewing machine, small electric battery and so forth. Everything sold all right but the typewriter, and that proved to be a sticker. It acted in the most perverse manner, one day it would work all right, and on the day following no amount of persuasion could induce it to print half a dozen letters in their proper sequence. One day my employer remarked, "Bob, I wish you'd sell those typewriters to somebody; we've only got a gross of them here, but it looks as though we'll have to pay freight on the lot back to America."

I told him I would sell them to somebody, but I walked all over London

with the thing under my arm for two weeks and didn't sell half a dozen. One morning it proved to be in a good humor: worked all right that day, and I was lucky enough to call on the right man with it, a merchant on Clerkenwell Road. After a little demonstration he enthused over it considerably and said he would like to buy them, but objected to having to buy them through our commission agent. I replied, "If you want to buy our watches you'll have to buy them through him. This is an outside line he has no control over, but the only way for you to buy them direct is to take the sole agency for them yourself."

"Well, how many would I have to tyke?"

"You give me an order for two thousand of them at fifty cents each and I'll give you the agency for Great Britain for six months." I'd have included Timbuctoo, the Fiji Islands, and the territory adjoining the Zambesi River, making the time six years if necessary, but I didn't tell him that.

He seemed to be afraid of the quantity, and wanted a lower price, but I wouldn't budge, and after a couple of days' consideration he gave me an order for two thousand at fifty cents each.

Seven years afterwards I strolled into his store and shook hands with him, but I could see he had forgotten me. While he was trying to place me, I said:

"Well, old man, do you want any more dollar typewriters?"

Then he woke up.

"For 'eaven's syke, don't say typewriters to me, old chap; the lawst one of those bloomin' things went a few weeks ago."

For once I had broken a rule of mine never to overstock a man, as they had apparently lasted him seven years.

One day I suggested to the boss that if we could interest a certain party in the North of England---a very large advertiser---with the watches, and sell him, we would connect with the most desirable party in the country. We sent him some samples, but they were returned with the laconic note:

"Altogether too large for our trade."

It was suggested that I take the train, run up to Manchester, and have a personal interview with him. I agreed, but before I left London I found that he had the reputation of being an awful crank, fraternizing with other salesmen on the train they corroborated what I had heard of him, and when I finally got to Manchester, the clerk in his own office volunteered the same information. I sent in my card, and he returned it, condescending to see me at half-past eleven. I strolled into his office to find him seated at a roll top desk. He spun around in his swivel chair, glared at me, then roared out:

“Well! you represent Ingersoll, what do you want with me?”

I looked at him for half a minute, and then I shouted back,

“Well! I want to sell you a bill of watches.”

He looked as though I had hit him with a brick, and then---very mildly ---asked me to be seated.

That was all I wanted, a chance to talk, I had a spiel on those watches that would interest a Hottentot, and I knew that he was interested in the fool of a salesman who lacked appreciation of his dignity as a buyer.

I started in with my talk, watching him closely, and he listened in the most attentive manner for ten or fifteen minutes, then he butted in.

“But the watch is too big for me, sir.”

“It’s the greatest watch on earth for a boy.”

“Oh no, it’s too big for a boy.”

“Not on your life, when I was a kid I’d have been tickled to death with the lid of a coffee can with works in it, and that’s not so long ago either. No boy would criticize a present of that kind.”

“Well! sir, I don’t know much about the watch, but the salesman is a marvel, we’d like to get hold of a few fellows like you.”

“Yes, you’d give me as much as two pounds a week, wouldn’t you?”

I proved to be a poor salesman in his case, the best I could do was to get an order for samples. I could’nt blame him either, I knew the watch was too big at that time to be a practical seller, it was just evolving from a joke as a side-line to an important article. There was nothing in his last

remark to get a big head over. Any experienced specialty man should get scores of similiar compliments, if he does'nt, he's a misfit.

I remember calling on one big concern at least a dozen times. A dozen times I sent my card in to an invisible buyer, and it came back again just as often.

In a case of that kind, a salesman is helpless.

The buyer for each department had a room to himself, and a boy to take the business cards to him, if he sent it back again, that was all there was to it. One day I dropped into the office just in time to see the disappearing coat-tails of the man I thought I wanted.

I called to the boy. "Is that Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, sir." "Grab him quick, never mind the card."

The kid thought it was something special, and chased after him. Mr. Brown returned and I said:

"Well! Mr. Brown, this is my thirteenth call; every other time you have sent my card back again, not interested

This card reads, 'American specialties and novelties' and for all you know I might have a world beater among them."

In the meantime I had opened my sample case and spread my samples out. He bought five gross of printing outfits, and some watches, and then he explained that his time was so valuable that he could'nt possibly interview every salesman. I told him that my time was valuable and that he would probably miss a number of pretty good things by being unable to grant a salesman with a new line a two minute interview.



THE DRUMMER'S VIEW OF THE SOUTH

Never been in the Sunny South? Well! old man, you've missed a treat,
I've wandered North and East and West, but the Sunny South is hard to beat;
They've none of your cold freezing blizzards, Zero's a stranger down there,
They've mocking birds, with mosquitos too, and everything that is fair.

Trains! did you say? Well! I guess, and beautiful service too,
There you will find fast fliers, the kind that go right through;
You think ten miles an hour is fast, why! some of their's make twenty;
Of course that's very dangerous, and accidents are plenty.

Many a night I have sacrificed the sleep I so sadly needed,
And many a train I have saved from wreck on the tracks that were badly
graded,

Just jumped from one seat to the other, avoiding with care the hat rack,
As I carefully balanced the rocking train, and kept it straight on the track.

Yes! I have ridden many a time on a bumping nerve-racking freight,
But they always give me the privilege of paying the first class rate,
Of course they're often six hours late, but trifles we ought not mention,
A straw on the track might have caused the delay, or something demanding
attention.

Immense hotels they have down there, for Northern tourists they make 'em,
But they're glad to see us boys with the grip, and they'd hate to have us
shake 'em,

Eggs, did you say? Well! we get 'em sometimes, if the hens very fre-
quently lay,
But at twenty-five cents a dozen you see, they're too high for three dollars
a day.

You'll probably never see an egg, and the steak will be imitation,
If you think you'll live high for two per day, it will prove all hallucination.
Pretty steep, three dollars a day? Well! some of 'em are two,
But they'll give you a room next an old back yard, and they'll charge you
the two for the view,

Chickens, what wonderful birds they must be, they each have forty feet,
They're sometimes on the bill of fare as a substitute for meat,
And if forty hungry drummers called for a fricassee,
They each would get a chicken's foot, for it always happens to me.

Sometimes you will get a scrawny neck, instead of the usual foot,
The waiter grins as you threaten him with the pointed end of a boot,
You relieve yourself of a few remarks as he brings a neck again,
It might be billed as chicken, but you're willing to bet it's a crane.

Some of the towns have two hotels, each of 'em duplicate,
You think it over and try the one with the most expensive rate,
You say some interesting things, and indulge in many a frown,
Next trip you try the other, after that you skip the town.

The inimitable nigger can juggle your plates in a group,
But if you forget to hand him a tip, he'll expectorate in the soup,
The heat makes him sweat most profusely, with a napkin he wipes his brow,
Then with the same cloth he wipes your plate, and hands it to you with a bow.

Hot! Yes! I must admit it is warm down there in the good old summer time
But the fragrant Northern hot-house flowers grow wild in the bright sunshine
There's where the sweet magnolias bloom, the figs and oranges grow,
And you save the price of a Turkish bath, for it is warm as the place below.

But say! if you think this is rough on the South, try the frozen North
my friend,

There you will find a man with a heart of a rubber and leather blend,
He'll style your introductory words as most unlimited gall,
And he'll give you a hand like a fish's tail, or refuse to shake at all.

But for courtesy pure and simple, just give me the Southerner,
He'll invite you in with a pleasant smile, you'll get a welcome there,
He'll give you the only seat in the store, you'll find him sympathetic,
If you'd win his heart for keeps, just vote the Democratic ticket.

Several times I have tried to quit this strenuous travelling life,
But it's a case of smoking cheap cigars if a fellow stays home with his wife,
We all of us feel blue sometimes; and get frequently down in the mouth;
So if I must live a drummer's life, just give me the Sunny South.

IN SCOTLAND

In this cosmopolitan country of America we have to call on people of all nationalities, and of them all I believe the Scotchman is the hardest. Tackle him on his native heath and he is almost invincible. My first experience was by appointment with a merchant in Edinburgh. In the first place, I was surprised to find such a pronounced brogue there, and for an outsider it was very difficult to carry on any kind of conversation. We talked in a more or less intelligible manner—generally less—for about fifteen minutes, but his end of it sounded like a Chinese laundry check to me. In Cuba I had to hire an interpreter, and it looked as though I would need one in Scotland. That particular man, though, wanted our goods, and it didn't prove hard to take his order.

One man asked me if I had any "wag-at-the-wa' clocks." What he wanted was a clock that would hang on the wall, with a long pendulum attached.

I called on another man in the same town, and it proved anything but easy sailing with him. I gave him every argument I knew, favored him with all the eloquence at my command, strained my vocabulary, gave him a kindergarten exhibition of scientific salesmanship, took him through all the degrees, and handed him all the logic I possessed.

It seemed to have as much effect as though I had been spending my time on a cigar store Indian.

Finally I noticed what I fancied to be a gleam of interest, and when I landed on what seemed to me the proper psychological moment, I asked:

"Well, how many do you want?"

He replied, "Hoot, mon, I canna buy 'em."

I asked where it hurt him, and he went on to explain that he had been in business for twenty years. Only twice in his whole experience had he

It's true he sees beautiful cities,
He seems to have money galore.
And travels the country o'er;
The best of the land, is his to command,

Wonderful stories he tells us,
And many a joke does he crack,
But when he's alone, he thinks of his home,
And wonders when he will get back.

His life appears very alluring
To the clerks, to you and to me,
But from his point of view, the towns
he goes through,
Are just bricks piled up differently.

There's always two sides to a story;
We, too often, just look at one;
It's not always summer with our care
free drummer,
Nor always, by any means fun.

Then here's to a right, bright good
fellow,
A lesson from him we can learn,
When things all go wrong—change
the moan into song,
And let the broad smile return.

Going through Vicksburg, Miss., on an early morning train the other day I overheard the following intellectual conversation. A man and his wife occupied seats near me: the man was of the tobacco chewing, expectorating type, the woman a tough-looking snuff chewer. He was trying to persuade her that that particular town was Vicksburg, but she declined to be convinced.

"Well, I knows very well this is Vicksburg."

"Well, I knows it ain't; if it is, what have they got them big letters up there fer then. EXIT?"

IN CANADA

I found the railroads in Canada treated the travelling man with decent consideration, similar conditions exist in England too for that matter.

They apparently appreciate the fact that he is a pretty liberal contributor to the passenger receipts, also that he supplies a considerable quantity of freight for them to handle, so they consider it good policy on their part to do business with him on a reciprocity basis.

The salesman joins an organization costing eight dollars a year, the first year the card of membership he secures is worth \$100.00 life insurance, the second year \$200.00, and so on till the tenth year when it reaches \$1000.00 and then the policy remains stationary.

In buying his R. R. ticket he presents his card of membership at the depot window, and buys his transportation at the rate of two cents a mile. On Friday or Saturday,—if he wishes to spend Sunday at home—he presents his card, and receives a round trip ticket at one cent a mile, good returning Monday. In that manner the railroad gets the money he would otherwise spend at the hotels. Abuse of the privilege such as loaning his card to other people, means that he will forfeit his membership.

In the South today I travel on probably thirty different lines in a year's time, on some I spend fifty to a hundred dollars annually and, as a travelling salesman I get worse treatment than any other patron of the road.

No reduced rate anywhere, the farmer making his one or two little pleasure trips a year can wait for a periodical excursion and get a round trip ticket for probably one third the regular rate. That rate is of no use to me, because they won't check my trunk on that ticket, so I travel on the same train he does and pay the full fare.

When I went to Canada, I understood that an arrangement existed there, by which the salesman paid duty on his samples on going in, and received a

rebate for the full amount paid on his return, provided that he brought his original samples back intact.

When I reached there however, I found that if they ever had such a rule, it had been rescinded and that I would have to pay duty on all I took in, receiving nothing back again.

I explained to the custom house official, a Frenchman, that I would like to take out a few of my best sellers, and leave the rest in bond. He said it was against their rules to do so, but finally agreed, and I paid him two or three dollars on what I took out.

One of the first interviews I had was with a buyer in a large department store in Montreal. He started to turn me down, said the Yankee generally proved so slick that they usually got the best of him, and so forth.

I finally persuaded him that there are exceptions to every rule, that I was one of the most innocent exceptions, that I had a few samples of my leaders with me and would guarantee the stock to come up to the samples. He gave me a nice order, bought everything I had, and then I tried to get him to add to it out of my catalogue.

He would'nt buy a single thing that I could'nt produce a sample of, and although I went into considerable detail regarding the wonders of a cyclometer that had recently been placed on the market, he would'nt buy, said he might if he could see the sample.

I returned to the custom house, got the cyclometer without much trouble, and sold him.

Shortly afterwards I interested a man in some pocket compasses but he would'nt buy without samples either. I returned to the custom-house, anticipating trouble and I was not disappointed.

The Frenchman lost his patience, became excited, and paced the room in considerable agitation.

"First you come, and you want zee pump, bell, saddle, and a whole lot of other sings, zen you come back and you want zee cyclom; and now you want zee compass. I'll send it all over to zee bond warehouse and you can

feex it with them."

"Well!" I replied, "sit down and don't get rattled over it, it's only a little thing and not worth fussing over. Say! this is a pretty nice town you've got here, is'nt it?"

"Yes, lofly town, before you leave you must go to zee top of Mt. Tom, zee view is grand from there."

"All right, I will. Sit down. Have a cigar?"

"Merci, monsieur."

I'm not in love with the Canadian cigar, but a few whiffs of the one I handed him produced an ecstatic smile.

"Say! I feex that for you, there's the chief outside, don't say a word about zee stuff you've already got."

"Not I, old buck, I'm dumb."

He introduced me to the chief, explained that I was a New Yorker ignorant of their rules, and would appreciate the courtesy, if he would let me take out a few things and leave the rest in bond.

The chief replied, "Certainly," and this time I took out half a dozen little things, of such small intrinsic value that they didn't charge me anything.

I suppose I could buy one or two houses with the money I've blown in on cigars, but they come in very conveniently sometimes.

In the Province of Quebec I found that a knowledge of French would have been a very handy thing, because while it's supposed to be an English country, nearly everybody speaks French, especially in the City of Quebec and in the smaller towns, and I had considerable difficulty parleyvooving my way around there. I got off at one little town and inquired the way to a large factory I wanted to get to. The man I inquired of was a Frenchman, and his reply was practically unintelligible. He gesticulated considerably, did a whole lot of hand talking, and shouted at me, thinking that perhaps I could understand a noisy French, if I proved idiot enough to fail to grasp his meaning in a normal tone.

It was all very amusing but I finally had to leave him, just about as wise

as when I started the interview, although I did get something out of his peculiar patois about- "Up zee leetle hill."

I finally tackled a little butcher's boy and he replied.

"Gee whiz! Mister, I've been here three years and this is only the second time I've had a chance to speak English."

"Well! what did that frog-eater mean?"

I finally got the information I wanted and discovered that the Frenchman had described a long stairway at the factory entrance as "Up zee leetle hill."

I left the Canadian hotels with some little regret.

Plenty of fresh salmon and venison, trout for breakfast caught in a stream only a stone's throw away, maple syrup from trees seen from one's bedroom window, and while I'm not a glutton, I'm quite willing to get indigestion on that kind of grub.

In all of my trips, I always managed to get a good business out of Canada, and that is the principal object of every trip.



A little salesman was sitting next a window in the train the other day with the most forelorn woebegotten look on his face. Another salesman watched him for awhile, noticed he was looking pretty blue, and thought he'd go over and cheer him up a little.

He went over, took the other half of the seat and sat there about five minutes without saying a word.

Finally he inquired, "Are you in business, my friend?"

"Yes, the jewelry business." "Salesman?"

"Well! I used to think I was a salesman, but today I know I'm only a travelling man."

ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS

"What an ideal existence is the drummer's every day,
Full of pleasure and enjoyment as he travels on his way,
Just one solid round of pleasure, always smiling, looking prime,
Just a regular little picnic, something doing all the time."

Just amusing himself talking to a drummer in the store,
A young clerk in admiration envying him the clothes he wore.
"It's all right," replied the drummer, "from your little point of view,
Always there is something doing, always there is something new."

Yes! it seems a regular picnic, seems a regular little joke,
Going round and taking orders, always flush and never broke,
Always riding in a Pullman, seeing all there is to see,
Yes, your guess is nearly right, son, nothing is too good for me.

How about the days when orders are but few and far between?
And your boss is sore and sulky and the competition keen;
Then you wish you'd never started, and your thoughts fly back, but say!
What's the use of getting homesick, home's two thousand miles away.

Just take Crystal Springs, for instance, nothing doing in that town,
Called on every blooming merchant, everybody turned me down,
I soon tired of the scenery and the thought flashed through my brain,
I would leave that ancient borough and would catch the midnight train.

Now that's just a lovely depot, quite a cheerful waiting room,
Filled with rank spittoons and so forth, foul as any ancient tomb;
Just an evil smelling oil lamp shed its fitful gleam around,
While a drunk was loudly snoring, making quite a cheerful sound.

I approached the ticket window and asked with an humble mien
If the twelve o'clock was coming and what time it would be in:
The superior ticket agent, I'd disturbed from deep repose,
With a foolish grin said sweetly, "Eleven-sixty I suppose."

Just about ten minutes later he marked up that self-same train,
Just an hour and fifteen minutes late, and soon he came again,
Added still ten other minutes with his little piece of chalk,
Seemed to me I'd get there quicker if I started in to walk.

Now if under these conditions you discover any fun,
Or with grim attempt at humor, you essay a little pun,
And there's really humor in it, I'll take off my hat to you,
For that's more than old Josh Billings and Bill Nye combined could do.

Well! at last I heard the whistle and my train came limping in,
And I reached my destination, landed in the town of Lynn,
Squeezed with other fellow sufferers in the crowded antique 'bus,
And we reached the Hotel Leary with but very little fuss.

There I took the pen they offered, signed on in the murky gloom,
While a vicious black mosquito took the number of my room,
Sang aloud his well known signal, rang his clarion war alarm,
When I reached the room assigned me there I found a mighty swarm.

Then ensued a sanguinary struggle that should place my name
With the heroes and the warriors who have fought through blood and flame
How I'd gladly change with Dewey or Horatius in that fight
With that endless host of demons through the watches of the night.

I wish you had shared the breakfast that I got the following day,
Started in with patent cereal and it tasted like chopped hay,
While the butter looked anæmic—though it proved to be quite strong—
And the tablecloth was dirty, had been used a week too long.

Then the bacon tasted salty, so I thought I'd try a chop,
But that proved quite a mystery and I soon was glad to stop:
In my vain attempt to eat it, every bit stuck in my throat,
When I solved the problem later 'twas a piece of tough old goat.

Coffee on the blink and muddy, eggs laid just three months too soon,
Cobwebs hanging from the ceiling in a beautiful festoon,
Scores of flies that buzzed around me while I tried to eat the stuff,
In a monotone hummed to me, "Well! old man, it's pretty tough."

"Well! old boy, I've heard your story," said that retail grocery clerk,
"Seems to me it ain't all glory, guess I'll stay on here and work;
But you fellows seem so cheerful, that I thought I'd like to roam,
Through the country like you folks, but say, old sport, I'll stay at home."

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

A VACATION

A little over twelve years ago I decided that I would take a vacation and make a little trip over to the old country. I engaged my passage on the *Majestic* to sail in September. In those days I worked for a Boston firm, and a friend of mine there said I was very foolish to waste any money on a cabin passage, and suggested that he could get me over free of expense. He explained that a friend of his was captain of a freight boat travelling between Boston and Liverpool; that said captain tired with the ordinary freight crew as companions, and that he would be glad to take anyone who was a good conversationalist, and necessarily, good company, along with him. I told him I would do my little best to entertain the captain, so I cancelled my passage on the *Majestic*, and on the evening of the twelfth,---I believe the boat was due to sail on the thirteenth---went down to the dock to interview him.

After the first five minutes of conversation, my free trip began to look very problematical. The captain explained that the last time he had taken a dead-head, some spy on board had notified the company, and he had nearly lost his position. I had figured that, as captain, he was sort of privileged character, and that he had the privilege of taking a companion with him if he wished to do so, so this phase of the situation struck me unexpectedly. I explained that I would have to wait a week for another boat, and the delay would prove most inconvenient for me, besides being expensive. I let my friend do most of the talking, and he finally arrived at an understanding with the captain that if I'd sign on as a distressed seaman or as a freight hand, it would be all right when we got out to sea. Meaning, I supposed, that once out of sight of the land, I would be the guest of the captain. This

looked all right to me, but if it failed to come off as I anticipated, I could see a life-sized picture of myself as a distressed seaman climbing the mast in a storm, when I'll bet I couldn't climb the thing in a calm. I didn't fancy the idea at all, so I decided I would sign as a freight hand, although I was very ignorant as to what my duties might be in that line.

On the morning we were to sail, I hunted up the oldest suit of clothes I had and put in an appearance at the dock bright and early. I found them loading cattle and the first job I had to do was to punch cows. The cattle, more or less willingly, walked down a long gang-plank to the boat; occasionally there would be an obstinate cow---probably gifted with perspicacity and who had a vision of an axe waiting for her on the other side,--who would require considerable persuasion before she could be induced to embark. I was furnished with a big stick and instructions to apply a little Roosevelt administration to any animal evidencing that inclination.

Well! we got all of them on at last, and the boat pulled out into the harbor, and they proceeded to read the roll call of the crew. I didn't feel at all flattered to find that I had secured a berth with the cattle gang. They got down to work immediately afterwards, and a fellow came up to me and ordered me below. He was a villainous looking individual, so far as I could see he was without a single redeeming feature in his whole countenance, and I could see trouble ahead. I didn't like his looks nor his manner, so I asked him who he thought he was talking to. He told me to follow him below and I would soon find out. In those days I seldom dodged a scrap, so I accompanied him, but when we got below he seemed to forget all about it.

I found my duty was to help feed the cattle; they give them a very light diet the first day or so of the voyage, so after we had thrown them a little hay, I found time to look around. The prospect seemed to be anything but a cheerful one, cattle all around, and the company seemed to be on par with the cattle. The sleeping quarters consisted of a long row of about twenty narrow bunks and they wouldn't pass a Board of Health examination. Twenty more were immediately above them, all so

close to each other that a fellow could hardly avoid contact with the occupant of the next one. I chummed in with a little Welshman who was working his way home from South Dakota. He was as tough as they make 'em; at swearing he was a genius, and he had a wonderful vocabulary in that line. The average English oath proved altogether inadequate to express his ideas with, so he had borrowed the cream of the swearing words used by the other nationalities, and the cosmopolitan anathema he had at his tongue's end was truly amazing.

Any port in a storm, he was the most sociable fellow there, and I had to content myself with him.

Almost the first thing he said was, "I ain't going to sleep in those beds, they're filthy." At least that was what I understood him to say, but as he averaged an expletive for every word, the result sounded like Choctaw, and it was a little difficult to get at the meaning of his remarks. I had arrived at his conclusion so we decided we would hunt for another place to sleep. It struck me that a professional hobo would have found it a problem to locate a comfortable spot, and I discovered that sleeping accommodations on the lower deck of a cattleboat are pretty scarce. After much investigation, the best we could do was to lie on the hard cement floor with about as much hay for a pillow as I could hold in one hand, and the edge of the tarpaulin cover of the hatch-way over our heads.

I passed anything but a comfortable night; the lowing of a seasick cow is not a good substitute for a mother's lullaby song, and I didn't particularly object when they dug us out at four o'clock the next morning to water the cattle. In my brief experience I didn't find out the best way to water them. The reservoir was a large barrel from which the water was baled by a man standing on a box, and then the bucket was passed down the line of men. I took my place in line, but got so much of the water on my legs that I applied for the position of baler. I was promoted to the box, only to spill a whole lot of it down my neck, consequently by the time we got through, I was in a lovely condition.

I have met in my experience a number of people who have so little control over temper that when they lose it they become temporarily insane and irresponsible. One of the cattle-hands proved to be a sample of that class. He took exception to the quality of my work as a helper and ordered me to do it differently. A remark I made in reply seemed to irritate him, but I walked away without giving it another thought. I heard a pattering of running feet behind me and wheeled just in time. He had a pitch-fork aimed at my back, and if I hadn't turned just in time I have not the slightest doubt but that I would have been punctured. I threw my hand around to my hip pocket and he seemed to think better of it, as I remarked, "Willie, just one more little step and you will be converted into an interesting hospital case." Apparently he had no desire for conversion and that ended the episode.

When breakfast was summoned I was decidedly hungry, but when it was served I found that I could not eat a thing. Tough hotels have almost eliminated my squeamishness, so I had no fault to find with the food. They had nice, fresh rolls and butter, ship's coffee seldom is good, but that was passable. I didn't expect to find any finger bowls or napkins, but I did think the men might have washed their hands before they sat down to eat. That slight neglect took my appetite away. It was the same thing at dinner and supper, too. I couldn't eat under those conditions, but retired to sleep at night ravenously hungry.

We got a little more hay this time, but we had only been lying down about half an hour when I kicked the Welshman.

"Get up, Welshy, if we stay here we will get wet through."

The rain was pouring in torrents, the hatchway above us was open, and because of the position we were lying in, it poured on to us like water running off a roof. The Welshman got up, and in his peculiarly inimitable manner grumbled in a monotone; then we started on another tour of investigation for new sleeping quarters. He finally spied a little shelf away up on the side of the boat, climbed up, stretched himself on

it, and although in imminent danger of falling off, was snoring in two minutes. I looked up at him enviously, and believe I wished he would fall off because I could find no place for myself, but I finally lay down on the hard cement floor with my arm for my pillow. I had a gun in my hip-pocket, and rolled over on to that so often during the night, that the memory of those few hours is painful even yet.

Four o'clock came at last. A nasty, dirty, choppy morning at sea, raining in torrents, the wind howling through the rigging in the most dismal manner, like a tortured banshee, and the boat doing all kinds of complicated acrobatic stunts among the waves. The poor cattle were in bad shape and looked so pitiable that I believe I felt more sorry for them than I did for myself, they were so sick that some of them died.

I was so hungry that morning that I thought I could eat under any conditions, and I started with a roll and butter. My eyes wandered over to the dirty hands though, and my attempt to eat proved a failure. It takes a lot to make me seasick, but that proved to be a surfeit, and I will draw a veil over the subsequent proceedings.

Meanwhile, I had been wondering how far out to sea I had to get before the captain thought it necessary to redeem his promise. Nearly two days out, no land in sight, and no captain visible, and I decided that I had had about all of my present quarters that I wanted. I found that the beauty I had the few words with in Boston Harbor was a section boss. To explain that, there was one man ahead of the whole gang, and as he couldn't keep track of them all himself, he had divided them into sections and had a deputy over each. The head of my section was my friend of the villainous countenance, so I went to him and said, "Here, if money will get me out of this mess, you can consider me out."

"All right," he replied, "give me ten dollars and I'll let you lay off work till we get to Liverpool."

I decided I would see the captain first, so I went on a hunt for that individual. I found him on the bridge and started, "Well, captain, I

thought you were going to take me under your fatherly care when we got out to sea ?”

“No, no,” he replied, “I explained to your friend that it would be impossible. I told him that we have doctors, lawyers, professional men and college students come out this way to save money and I thought you would like to do it.”

I told him that I did not care about saving money in that manner, and suggested that I pay my fare and go as a cabin passenger. He replied that it would be impossible, to do such a thing would be as much as his position was worth, he would do as much for me as he would do for his own brother, but he dare not do a thing. This seemed to leave no alternative but to go back to my amiable head, which I proceeded to do. I told him that if he would give me a place to sleep I would give him the ten dollars.

There were four or five section heads, and they had a cabin between them, so he advanced me to that. It proved only one degree better than the other and I slept the remainder of the voyage with my clothes on.

Then I went to the poorly paid cook: “Cook, if you will give me a cup of coffee and a sandwich once in a while between here and Liverpool, I’ll give you ten bob.”

That was only two dollars and a half, but it looked big to him, and proved the best investment in the way of a tip that I had ever made. It secured me roast beef, ham and eggs, chicken, custards, puddings, and so forth, and I lived high for the rest of my trip. I gave the same tip to the steward to let me leave my trunk in his room, gave away sundry smaller tips, spoiled the appearance of a box of cigars, and have been wondering ever since where I made any money on that deal.

It certainly proved a long ten day trip; I don’t know whether any one noticed it at the time or not, but those were the longest days since Joshua commanded the sun to stand still. My only diversion was a book, and the most comfortable seat I could find, a nice, soft coil of tarred rope.

Everything comes to an end, and at last we reached the Mersey. I gave away the clothes I had worn, put off in a boat for the dock, called a cab for 'Lime Street station, and as we bowled along, made the mental resolution that no one would ever hear a word from me about it. Here it is though, and with a cordial invitation to my friends to kick me hard if they ever find that I am fool enough to contemplate another cattle-boat trip.



I was standing on the side-walk of a small town in Tennessee talking to my customer, when a diminutive coon came along, jauntily carrying a gun over his shoulder, and swinging three small birds in his hand.

He stopped and addressed my customer.

"Say ! Mr. George, I jes met Uncle Jim down de street, an' he stop me and say 'Look here, nigger, dem birds will make a nice supper for my ole woman. How much does yo' want fo' 'em?'"

I done tole him he could have 'em fo' fo' bits, an he sez, 'What! fo' bits fo' dem free little birds? Why ! nigger, yo' sho is crazy.'

I sez, Dat's so, Uncle Jim, I done fergot dey wuz free, it's six bits."

“TABLE ETIQUETTE”

Swapping experiences with a fellow salesman one day, he told me of an incident that happened in a fine cafe in Cincinnati. I'll give it in his own words.

“I went in to dinner and was placed at a table where a young couple—apparently a bridal pair—were just getting through. The way they ate the dessert was so amusing, that the whole meal must have been a circus, and was sorry I had missed it. The best was yet to come though. The waiter brought them two finger bowls, each had a little sprig of mint and a dink little piece of lemon in it. The girl watched the fellow, following his cue in everything, but this time he was'nt equal to the occasion. He might have experimented with the soup with his fork, and probably had considerable trouble juggling the peas with his knife, but he wouldn't take chances with this new drink. He shied, and said to the waiter.

‘We don't wish any of those, thank you.’

Well! I grinned; he indignantly picked up his hat, came over to me and said,

‘I reckon you bain't in the habit of eating in such swell places as this be you?’

Let's draw a veil over the rest of it.”

About fourteen years ago I sat down to dinner in a popular priced restaurant in a flourishing town in Mass. Barnum's circus was there that day, a lot of simon pure farmers were also there. One of them sat next to me, and as he didn't know how to order his dinner, I thought I'd help him out.

They had a combination menu, the regular dinner bill of fare was printed on one side of it and a-la-carte orders on the other. I told him to order soup, and he got away with that all right. Next I told him to pick out the meat

he wanted and the girl would bring him some vegetables with it. When he finished that, he picked up his hat to go, then I said to him,

"Don't you want any dessert?"

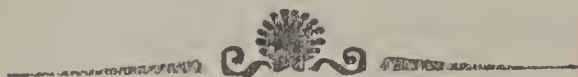
He replied, "Do I get more yet?"

"Sure, sit down and order it."

He sat down again, and looked over the bill of fare carefully while the girl patiently waited. He failed to see anything more he fancied on the dinner bill and he turned over to the a-la-carte side.

"Well! I reckon I'll take a couple of fried eggs."

The girl roared, I smiled a little smile, and he left.



The Southerner is a very sociable individual, and if a stranger wants to meet you, instead of standing on ceremony and waiting for an introduction, he just introduces himself. Very often he starts a conversation without any preliminaries at all, and frequently you find yourself talking to someone without the ghost of an idea as to who he is.

I had quite an interesting conversation one day with a stranger in a hotel in a Mississippi town.

I thought he was a fellow traveller, and ten minutes probably elapsed before I discovered that he was the Governor of the State.

Then I told him that he looked intelligent enough to be a salesman, and that I had taken him for one. He seemed to feel quite flattered at the compliment.

FOR THE BEGINNER

WITH APOLOGIES TO THE OLD TIMER

Three bricklayers from Lancashire, England, were fellow-passengers with me one trip from New York to Baltimore. All of them had been imbibing too freely, and one of them took a fancy to me and became confidential.

"I 'ave a art I 'ave, and I knows the bricklaying game, too, I served me seven years apprenticeship I 'ave, and I can 'old me own with any of 'em."

Experience helps in every line, but the salesman who starts out with plenty of common sense, full of confidence in himself, some little knowledge of human nature, and fully appreciating the value of a pleasant smile, will not have to wait seven years to make good. With a good line, the chances are he will be successful from the start. When I started, I turned down a salary proposition—a sure thing—and commenced on a commission basis. I had a seasonable line and started writing orders from the first day. I have a great deal of sympathy for the new man who fails to take an order the first day or so. I have an idea that he would get very blue, and expect he would think he had stumbled into the wrong vocation and was not cut out for a salesman. A skunk—failure to scratch an order-book—during the day is always discouraging. The old salesman—a man with probably a fine record back of him—who runs into an extended skunk lasting several days, thinks that he used to know how to sell goods and imagines he is to blame, because he believes he is then a back number.

I've had a good many years' experience since that time, but two or three days of that kind of thing proves pretty discouraging even now. I flatter myself that I do no superfluous worrying, because I realize the

futility of it, and I always wind up my day conscious of the fact that I have done the best I could, and if during the day I have not been guilty of any bad errors of judgment, I have nothing to reproach myself with. Most of the salesmen that you meet will tell you that they never worry, but let me illustrate. A year or so ago I met a friend of mine in a town in North Carolina, and this subject happened to be our topic.

"Taylor," he said, "let me tell you something. This game of worrying when there is nothing doing is dead wrong. I quit that fool business long ago; if it fails to come my way to-day, I know I'll get it to-morrow, and I always try to keep a record back of me, so that there'll be no kick coming from the firm. I've cut out the drink, too."

This little conversation took place on Saturday. Business had evidently been good that week and it was easy to be philosophical. I met him again on Monday afternoon in another town and accosted him.

"Well, Wall, how's business?"

He assumed a most disgusted expression and replied, "Abosolutely rotten, old man, and I'm going to buy a quart bottle."

He was somewhat of an exception though, because a good salesman wouldn't get discouraged over one day's hard luck, nor would he take to drink to get a false cheerfulness.

Never butt in. A specialty man introducing a new article or seeking a new customer, knows that to sell his man it is absolutely essential that he have his undivided attention until the deal is consumated. He spends, we will say, fifteen to thirty minutes, gradually but surely bringing his man from the point of apathy and complete indifference, up to the stage of interest necessary to make a sale. At the crucial moment perhaps, Bill Smith, an old travelling friend of the buyer, drops in. The all-important interview is taking place probably at the back of the store. Bill can see that the buyer is engaged, and he can easily sneak out again without being observed, but that's not Bill's way. No, William walks the full length of the store, butts in on your interview, sticks out his hand to your man:

"How are you Fred, don't let me disturb you, I see you are busy, just thought I'd drop in and shake hands."

It's all off, the spell is broken, the buyer knows you nearly had him and he's going to be as leary and suspicious of you as the trout was: the trout, the large one, that got away from your hook the last time you went fishing. You've used all your best arguments, and like the trout, the man won't be interested in the same bait again.

Now, Bill didn't mean any harm, and according to our ethics of the road, you have but a very slim case against him, but you feel like taking him up a back alley somewhere and saying an infinite number of interesting things to him.

In England, the salesman carries what we might call "the courtesy of the road," to what may seem like unnecessary extremes. He opens the door of a store—if it's a glass door he just looks through—and if he sees the buyer in conversation with anyone, either salesman or customer, he walks along to the next store. To my mind, that one trait is about the only evidence he shows of salesmanship. Experience has taught him that it is bad business to butt in on his customer's selling interviews; common courtesy tells him that it is the height of ignorance to do so in the case of his fellow salesman, and he knows that the best possible time for him to tackle the buyer is in his leisure moments, when he can command the whole of his attention, with nothing to distract his interest.

Don't think you know so much you cannot learn more. Emerson says: "Shall I tell you the secret of a true scholar? It is this: Every man I meet is my master in some point, and in that I learn of him."

A number of years ago a Baltimore clothing house started one of their inside men on the road. He had a technical knowledge of worsteds and woolens, but a minimum knowledge of salesmanship. He went all the first week without a nibble, and most of the second with a similar result. The poor fellow was rapidly getting so blue that he couldn't talk cheerfully enough to interest anybody. Towards the end of the second week

he ran into a man who seemed to show a gleam of interest in him. He told him his troubles, and wound up with:

"I have been out two weeks and haven't sold a bill; I don't believe I'm cut out for a salesman, but if you will, you can do me a big favor. I would like to know if my failure is my fault, or the fault of the goods I carry, and before I send in my resignation, I would like to have you come down to the hotel, look over the stock and tell me exactly what you think of the situation."

That particular man was the proprietor of four large stores although the salesman was unaware of the fact. He told him that as a favor he would go down to the sample room with him, although he had a full stock of clothing and would not be able to do anything for him. Once in the sample room he saw the boy had some very good values, and that he could use some of the goods, so he told him to take out his order-book.

"Send me one hundred pairs of this number, two hundred of this—" but here the salesman broke in:

"Say, mister, quit your fooling, will you? This is a serious thing to me and no laughing matter."

The buyer replied, "I'm not fooling, you have some good values here, and I can use the goods all right."

By this time the salesman had reached a condition where he couldn't write out an order, so he handed the buyer his pencil and order-book and said:

"Say, mister, you write it out, will you, please? I'm too nervous."

That was the beginning of a successful career and he appealed to the human side of the buyer just in time.

If you can, without intruding, watch the other fellow in his interview, study his address and his method of introducing himself, his opening talk may give you some valuable points. Later on though, don't be an imitator, or even too much of a plagiarist in repeating the stereotyped

talk possibly furnished by the house, because originality is much more effective and impressive than something you have learned by heart.

They tell the joke of one fellow who had his little speech all memorized, and who used to repeat it like a parrot, never varying it, always the same to everyone. Stop him at any point and he would have to repeat the whole spiel all over again.

Have plenty of confidence in yourself, not over-confident to the extent of egotism, but don't be afraid of the other fellow. When I started, the fact that the proprietor that I might be interviewing was possibly a millionaire, or perhaps a man of superior education, sometimes used to oppress me to the point of embarrassment. I quickly got over that by figuring that in spite of his wealth or education, I was willing to bet my last dollar, and mortgage a few I expected to make, that morally I was every whit as good as he; on that ground I met him on an absolutely equal footing, and I soon found I could talk to a millionaire as easily as I could to a peanut vendor.

When I entered the dining room of a fine hotel, I used to have an equally embarrassed feeling. A dignified head waiter at ten dollars a week, would escort me down a long dining room crowded with finely dressed people, and I used to have the fool idea that every eye in the room was focussed on me. That feeling passed away, and I made up my mind that as I am not particularly good-looking, nor a conspicuous freak of nature, no one in the dining room gave me a thought.

To wind up this rambling sort of an article, I will just say, that while there are many different grades of salesman, two classes stand out especially distinct, the honest and the dishonest. The latter frequently has a very ephemeral career. He starts out with just one idea in his head—to get orders—and thinks any means are justified that will produce that desirable result. Such a man will sell a customer and promise that he will give him the sole agency of his particular line, promising by all that is sacred that he will sell no one else in that town, and then

proceed to sell everyone there that he can land; lying about his goods and misrepresenting everything generally. At night as he copies out his orders, he grins broadly as he thinks of the gullibility of the average merchant. Next trip, very much to his surprise, instead of an avalanche of orders he runs into a tornado of abuse, and gets all that is coming to him. Later you'll find him back behind the counter, or possibly driving a garbage wagon.

The fellow who is willing to sacrifice an order, rather than lie about his goods, or give a man his honest advice as to the quantity he should buy rather than to overload him, will invariably win out, and build up a permanent territory. Early in my career I started on the principle that honesty is the best policy, and have always found it paid fair dividends, so that I can honestly recommend the same policy to the beginner.



The bus was well filled with the usual crowd when a bridal couple appeared at the door

"Is there room for us to squeeze in there?" inquired the groom

An old travelling man replied:

"Well! I guess there is, partner, but if I were in your place. I'd wait till I got home."

THE NOMAD

My home is wherever I hang up my hat,
Wherever I camp for the night,
Sometimes it's a swell
Seven story hotel
With a button to turn out the light.

With porters and bell-boys all standing in rows,
Caucasian and heathen Chinees,
With greatest elation
For small compensation
Fall over each other for me.

The clerk greets me gladly--no prodigal son
A better reception could get---
With mien deferential,
Although it's essential
That I have the price, you can bet.

A dignified waiter attends to my wants,
And provides me a kingly feast,
Soups, salads and snacks
And fine canvas-backs
And lobsters a foot long at least.

Surfeited at last I have time to enjoy
A beautiful scene of the North,
For snow is the king
And is scintillating
In jewels of fabulous worth.

In wonderful splendor it scatters it's gems
In lavish and prodigal style,
With bountiful hand
All over the land
And they are all mine for awhile.

But shortly I leave this fairy-like clime,
For the land where the roses bloom,
Where gorgeous flowers
Fill Arcadian bowers
With rich Oriental perfume.

Where sweet pomegranates are bursting their shells,
Where red-ripe persimmons hang low,
The mocking bird sings
As he flutters his wings,
And flirts with his mate in the bough.

I envy no man, be he pirate or king,
Or noble of high degree,
I'm as gay as the bird
—Whose song I've just heard—
Who warbled the song of the free.

My home is wherever I hang up my hat,
Wherever I camp for the night,
The world is my home,
Wherever I roam,
I'm a happy Ishmaelite.



IN CUBA

When I commenced this little volume, it was with the intention of making a literary specialty out of it, and I didn't expect to write anything that would not be especially of interest to the travelling salesman. I don't believe anybody else will be interested anyway, so I won't cater to outside taste. With this in mind, I'll have to cut out the description of Havana Harbor, the beauties of the country and so forth, because few of us are interested in these things; plenty of pen-shovers who know how to write have written interesting pages on them, and anything I might say would be tame in comparison.

Eliminating these things though, leaves very little for me to write about as my selling experience there was disappointing. Before I reached Havana I was frequently told that so many people there spoke English that an interpreter would be a quite unnecessary encumbrance, a sort of superfluity. I soon found they were mistaken, in the best hotel none of the waiters understood enough English to bring more than half the breakfast I ordered.

My first trouble began at the custom-house. One of the officials there wore such an impressive beautiful bunch of whiskers that I took him for no less than a dignified Spanish grandee. He appraised my samples, counted, then weighed them, and charged me a certain sum of money that I understood would be returned to me when I left the country, provided all my samples were intact upon my return. When he finally refunded my money, he deducted two dollars and a half for insurance whatever that may be. If anyone had felt inclined to swear at him it would have done no good, as he could'nt understand a word of English apparently and he would probably have construed all anathema into something just complimentary of his whiskers.

I soon found it would be impossible to get along without an interpreter,

and hired one for the usual price, five dollars—American—for the day.

He certainly could talk too, but it was all Greek to me and I never found out whether he was a good salesman or not either, but to judge by the results he was N. G., as he only landed one order in four days and that fellow cancelled before we had a chance to ship it. I told him what to say, drilled him thoroughly on the most particular points, and he gestured and chattered in great shape, all to no avail.

I used to watch him talking to a prospective customer, and wondered how they could understand each other. What he lacked in selling points and logical arguments, he made up in volume and noise. During my brief stay there, I picked up a few words, but listening to my interpreter, I never could understand whether he was abusing me for an American pig, or if he was really devoted to my interests, and really doing the best he could.

After one interview I asked him to repeat the conversation, and it seemed he had memorized the points I had impressed him with, and had elaborated on them to some advantage. It's a big handicap though, trying to do business through another individual in that manner. In the psychology of salesmanship, personality, magnetism, and a number of abstract things figure in the sale that is made, even the inflection of the voice is quite a factor, and none of these could be brought into play through the medium of another man, so that I was practically helpless.

One man was handling a cheap Swiss watch that I knew was no good.

"Tell him" I said through the interpreter, "that if he winds that thing up at night, it won't run till the morning, he'd have to break a beautiful dream in two to keep it going at all, as it has to be wound about three times a day to keep it moving."

The other fellow shrugged his shoulders in so eloquent a manner that I could see that he apparently acquiesced in what I had said, so I asked again.

"Well ! what does he say ?"

"He admits all that senor, he says that he knows the watch is rottawn, but he sells many of them, and he says yours might not at all go "

Just as illogical as a woman, and I've always been a fiat failure with female buyer.

We started in to work at eight a. m , at ten-thirty he would quit and go to breakfast, to show up again at about one o'clock, about four I'd find the Cuban sun so hot that I'd want to quit myself. All he took before eight would be a cup of coffee and some fruit, the ten-thirty breakfast seemed to be a substantial meal, so substantial that it made him drowsy and a little siesta was then in order. In wandering around Havana, he steered me into four merchants who could speak English, and I sold three of them, one a thousand watches, but taken altogether I don't believe my Cuban trip was a profitable one,



I listened to a negro woman evangelist in a town in North Carolina on one occasion, and when it came to the all-important part of the collection, she put up the most unique appeal I ever listened to.

"Now I can't talk ner sing very well, because I done lost free toofses, an' I foun' a dentist down de street, what says he'll put 'em back in again fer seven dollars an a half. Now all yo' white folkse what looks like ready money, step up to de contribution plate. Dere's a whole lot here what looks like dey wuz good fer two bits, de res' of yo' come up wid dem dimes and nickles. Bress de Lawd."

SOME HOTELS

Speaking of hotels, you will find the whole fifty seven varieties in Texas, good, bad and indifferent, the best and worst are all represented in the Lone Star State.

One man I know of takes a singular pride in his reputation of running the worst on earth, and is quite jealous of any one who might run him a close second. There are plenty of bad ones, but so far as I know he is almost alone in his particular class.

A lean cadaverous looking individual, one thing about him always proved a mystery to me, and that was how on earth he always managed to wear a three days' beard. They claim that he is the source of most of the old stock jokes regarding tough hotels. This was the fellow that the salesman gave the fifty-two cents to, to pay for his meal and when he inquired about the odd two cents the victim replied that he wanted him to make fifty cents clear profit on the meal.

They say it was his veranda a salesman was sitting on just before supper, and when the bell rang, a dog sitting near him howled dismally. You all know the rest, the man turned to the dog and inquired:

"What are you howling about? You don't have to eat it."

Pretty hoary, those two. I always had an idea that Noah entertained his wife with similar stories in trying to break the monotony of the watery scenery, but fellows that know, say they originated in that Texas hotel.

He has some good features about him however, he'll cash checks or drafts for anybody, and has on hand, ornamenting the walls and so forth, quite a few expensive souvenirs of this little indulgence. He's quite a humorist too, and passes off all criticism with a joke.

When I'm hungry I'd rather have a good steak than listen to a poor imitator of Artemus Ward, but a good steak would be a great novelty in

that place. His jokes mollify a great many of the boys, and in spite of his hotel, he is quite popular with most of them.

One man handed him a dollar bill in payment of his account for the day. The proprietor looked at the dollar and said,

“What’s this, my friend?”

“That’s for my hotel bill for the day.”

“But this is a two dollar a day house.”

“Why ! I thought it was a dollar.”

“That’s all right my friend, there’s no harm done, everybody thinks the darned dump is a dollar a day till they come to pay the bill.”

Another fellow kicked when paying for a meal, and the landlord remarked to him,

“What the deuce are you kicking about? You only had to eat one meal, while I’ve got to eat the blamed stuff all the time.”

Another one started to go uptown after supper, when the old man noticed him and asked where he was going.

He replied; “Well ! old man, to tell you the truth, I’m going out to see if I can get something to eat.”

The response he got was,

“Well ! old scout, if you’ll wait a few minutes I’ll go with you, I ain’t had a square meal in a month’s time.”

I had one experience there myself and arrived at the conclusion the half had not been told. I had one supper and a room, and my feeble pen wouldn’t do justice to it. Cobwebs everywhere, table cloth dirty, flies innumerable, and grub uneatable. In the first place the surroundings would have taken anyone’s appetite away and I wouldn’t have tried to stick it out if I hadn’t been ravenously hungry. My room was awful too; that’s a great mosquito town and the window was an open invitation to all of them. So thoughtful was he of the mosquitos that no attempt had been made in the form of screens to bar them, and that night figures among my painful reminiscences.

I found that I could get a train out of town at seven o'clock next morning, and I put in a six-thirty call. I paid my bill and the proprietor informed me that the train was twenty minutes late, and that I would have plenty of time for breakfast. I told him;

"Not for me, old sport, after that supper last night, I've got a beautiful appetite for breakfast, and I'd hate to spoil it by tackling yours, I'll wait till I get to the next town."

I didn't even get a joke for my dollar.

About eight years ago I had my first experience in Montgomery, Ala. This is no libel on the Montgomery of today, now they have good hotels there, but in those days I drew near Montgomery with considerable misgivings on account of the reputation of the hotels.

On the train I met a salesman who told me he had a private snap in Montgomery, and he kindly put me next. It seemed there was a retired wholesale grocer there, who, in his desire to keep in touch with the boys had thrown his house open to them. According to this man's description it was fine, home-cooking, bath, home-surroundings, everything pleasant, he guaranteed that I would be well pleased with it, and if not he would pay the bill.

I landed there on a Saturday morning, I remember.

A colored lady waited on me and accosted me with,

"Will you have ham or eggs?"

"What's that?"

"Will you have ham or eggs?"

"You'll have to speak a little louder, I'm a trifle deaf."

She repeated it, and I replied,

"What's the matter with ham and eggs?"

They compromised, I got ham and one egg.

The next question was "Tea or coffee?"

Now I drink tea about once a year, and decided that was the morning for my annual cup. She brought me a cup, very weak. I thought my nerves were in no danger, and had the audacity to ask for a second cup. This time

I got pure, unadulterated, undiluted hot water.

I took dinner with the whole family and one or two boarders.

The old lady did the carving, carefully measured with a practiced eye and cut off for me two square inches of pot roast. The string beans proved very stringy, immediately in front of me reposed in solitary grandeur on a coarse outside leaf of celery. I knew the old lady was watching me and carefully picked it up, examined it deliberately from every angle, and then—as I didn't want to rob some celery lover---very carefully put it back. The old lady missed nothing. Solicitous of my appetite she said to the girl:

“Give the gentleman the other celery.”

She brought a duplicate leaf of the one I had passed up, and as I thought they might want to make celery soup the next day, I declined it with thanks.

Supper and breakfast proved similar gastronomic pleasures, and next morning I told the waitress to notify the landlady that I wanted to pay my bill.

She sent the old man.

I told him I wanted to pay my bill and get out.

He replied that as there was no train out till night, I couldn't get out.

“That's all right” I retorted, “how much do I owe you?”

“But, my friend, if you're going away like this, there must be something wrong.”

I replied, “You're a good guesser, if you insist upon knowing, I'll tell you.”

I repeated to him all the above, and made a few appropriate remarks and told him he was running a boarding house that might be all right at four dollars a week, but that he had an awful nerve to think there were drummer boys living who would be glad to give him two dollars a day.

The old liar replied,

“I am very glad you told me this my friend, I've never thought of it in that light before. Now if you'll stay and give us another chance, I'll ge

anything for you that you might fancy. What would you like for supper for instance?"

I told him and he replied that he would get me a nice sirloin for supper. We had a very interesting little dialogue, but I wound up with

"No, I don't think I'll stay, enough is plenty, I'd look fine eating a nice juicy steak, while the boarder sitting next to me wore out his teeth, chewing on the indestructible piece of rubber you handed me last night."

I really believe he thought I was quite rude, and almost think I hurt his feelings, but he asked for it.

The only thing a great many of the hotel keepers know about running a hotel, is the price, two dollars a day.

An acquaintance of mine told me that he sat next to a farmer at dinner in a little town in Texas. He said the rube put away exactly three times as much as he did, but that they both went out together to pay for it. The farmer put down a quarter, and the travelling man laid down a twenty-five cent piece also. He was told that the price was half a dollar, and kicked, saying that the other fellow had only paid a quarter. All he got was

"Yes! but your house allows you two dollars a day for hotel bills and we ought to have it."

Good logic, possibly, but hardly a square deal.

In a little town in Arkansas, a peg-legged old fellow kept a poor sort of hotel, of the type only too frequently seen in the small towns of that state.

The old fellow was bold, brave as a lion when he thought the other fellow was too chicken-hearted to resent it, but occasionally he made a mistake and caught a tartar.

One day a travelling man---who was just preparing to leave town---complained of the treatment he had received in the hotel, and the proprietor, as usual, proceeded to cuss him out.

"You get out of my hotel and stay out."

"This is a public place" the salesman replied, "I've paid my bill and I'll get out when I'm ready."

Well ! they went at it, said a great many things the reverse of complimentary to each other, and as long as the scrap remained a purely verbal one the proprietor more than held his own, as that was his long suit. Finally the salesman became a little too personal in his remarks, the old man thought it was time to call a halt, so he called to his nigger porter.

“Silas ! go and fetch the marshall, I’ll have this fellow pulled for breach of the peace ”

As Silas started for the door, the salesman broke in.

“Well ! you old rascal, you’ve gone and done it now. Silas has gone for the marshall, I’ll be arrested and will have to pay a fine. I’m not going to be arrested for nothing, and if I’ve got to pay a fine, I’ll get my money’s worth.” He started to take off his coat and continued. “Before Silas comes back, I’m going to give you the d——— licking you ever had.”

The old man peg-legged hurriedly to the door and shouted,

“Ho ! Silas, come back here, see what you can do for this gentleman, and take his grips down to the depot for him.”

Some hotel-keepers say that the worst kickers they have are the fellows who get nothing to eat at home, but expect the earth when they get away, and kick if they don’t get it.

A pretty bright Irishman runs a hotel in the small town of Quanah, Tex. For a town of that size it’s a pretty fair hotel too. They have no elevator and are not strong on bell-boys, but it’s all right for a country town.

Some smart Aleo came along though and wrote on the wall—

“If I ever strike a worse hotel than this I’ll let you know.”

The Irishman’s wit was equal to the occasion. He wrote underneath—

“Wire me when you get home.”



Most of the negro religious meetings are interesting as well as humorous. Their arguments, if lacking in logic, are highly entertaining, and they tell an amusing story of a big Senegambian exhorter down in Texas. Among the negroes, he had the reputation of being the talkingest fellow in those parts, and with a wonderful voice, he made up in noise what he lacked in eloquence. After one of his emotional sermons, he had exhorted the crowd into a condition bordering on hysteria, and shouted for all dem sinners to come to de mo'ner's bench.

"Everybody come up!, all of yo' is on de straight an narrow paf which leads to destruction, all of yo' is wicked sinners, an' if yo' don't come up to de penitent fo'm and be saved, I'll call for de angel Gabrel to blow his horn."

Just at the psychological moment, a kid at the back did blow a horn. Every nigger there made a pell-mell Marathon for the door, and as the preacher cleared three chairs in the obstacle race, he yelled

"Oh! good Lawd, I did'nt mean it, I wuz jes' a talkin' in fun."

AN EXPERIENCE WITH A TRUNK LINE

About four years ago I dropped a specialty line, and went out with a trunk line. I thought---as many another salesman thinks---that a salesman is a salesman no matter what he may take hold of, but after years of experience, I'm not exactly full of admiration of my ability as a jewelry salesman.

After the first few weeks it seemed to me that I was entirely unfitted for that sort of a position, the average jewelry salesman seemed to be a strong competitor of Ananias, and I thought that if it was necessary to do a whole lot of lying about my goods, I would quit and get into a line where prevaricating was not entirely essential to success. After four years, however, I am still in the jewelry business and still making a decent living without lying about it.

I started out though, almost entirely ignorant of my line. In those days I could'nt tell a carbuncle from a bunyon, but I knew enough of salesmanship to make it go and am still plugging at it.

I remember getting off at a little town in Texas, and as usual I sent my trunk up to the store ahead of me, and followed it a few minutes later.

I met there an elderly gentleman who greeted me pleasantly, with typical Southern courtesy.

"I am sorry, sir," he said "that you took the trouble to send up your trunk, as there is absolutely nothing I can do for you."

"That's all right," I replied "your transfer man looks a deserving person, and I believe he'll appreciate the quarter all right. You won't charge me any rent for the space it takes up, will you?"

"Not a cent, sir, but I am so stocked I cannot buy a thing."

"Very well, sir," I replied, I'll guarantee I'm the most good-natured salesman you ever turned down. If you've never seen a real green jewelry drummer, just gaze upon me. I don't know a thing about jewelry, but I have

shown my line in a number of towns of this size and they tell me I've got the prettiest goods they've ever seen, now I'd just like to find out if you are of the same opinion."

"No, sir, I am very sorry, sir, but really I am too busy to look."

"Well !" I replied "I hate to be persistent enough to be offensive, but I would very much appreciate a few minutes of your time. Whether you buy or not is immaterial, as this is purely a missionary trip. If you will look and my line proves interesting, I'll come back again next trip, but I hate to make a town twice to show my line once."

"No, sir, I'm very sorry, etc."

"All right, sir, do you smoke?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well ! let's sit down and smoke ourselves to death," and I handed him my cigar case.

In the course of our further conversation, I found that my friend was of a literary turn of mind, so I said,

"By the way, Mr. P——., did you ever hear that amusing piece of poetry entitled "Interviewing St. Peter" ?

"No sir, I never did."

"Would you care to hear it?"

He replied that he would, and I recited the following piece of poetry.

I understand that it was written by a country editor in a little town in Michigan. In love with the daughter of the local druggist, he wanted to marry her, but the druggist's wife was a religious crank and would'nt countenance the match. He relieved his feelings of his opinion of her in the following.

"INTERVIEWING ST. PETER."

St. Peter stood guard at the Golden Gate
With a solemn mein and an air sedate,
When up to the top of the golden stair,
A man and a woman ascending there,

Applied for admission. They came and stood
Before St. Peter, great and good,
In hope the City of Peace to win.
And asked St. Peter to let them in.
The woman was tall and lank and thin,
With a scraggy beardlet upon her chin.
The man was short and thick and stout,
His stomach was built so it rounded out,
His face was pleasant, and all the while
He wore a kind and genial smile.
The choirs in the distance the echoes woke.
And the man kept still, while the woman spoke.

“Oh! thou who guardest the gate,” said she,
“We two come hither beseeching thee,
To let us enter the heavenly land,
And play our harps with the angel band.
Of me, St. Peter, there is no doubt,
There’s nothing from Heaven to bar me out,
I’ve been to meeting three times a week,
And almost always would rise and speak.
I’ve told the sinner about the day,
When they’d repent of their evil way,
I’ve told my neighbors, I’ve told them all
’Bout Adam and Eve and the Primal Fall,
I’ve shown them what they would have to do
If they’d pass in with the choosen few.
I’ve marked their path of duty clear,
Laid out a plan for their whole career.
I’ve talked and talked to them loud and long,
For my lungs are good, and my voice is strong.
So, good St. Peter, you’ll clearly see,
The gates of Heaven is open to me.
But my old man, I regret to say,
Hasn’t walked in exactly the narrow way.
He smokes and swears, grave faults he’s got,

And I don't know whether he'll pass or not,
He never would pray with an earnest vim,
Or go to revival, or join in a hymn.
So I had to leave him in sorrow there,
While I, with the chosen, united in prayer.
He ate what the pantry chanced to afford,
While I, in my purity, sang to the Lord,
And if cucumbers were all he got,
It's a chance if he merited them or not.
But oh! St. Peter, I love him so,
To the pleasures of Heaven, please let him go,
I've done enough, a saint I've been,
Won't that atone? Can't you let him in?
By my grim gospel I know 'tis so,
That the unrepentant must fry below.
But isn't there some way you can see
That he may enter who's so dear to me?
It's a narrow gospel by which I pray,
But the chosen expect to find some way,
Of coaxing or bribing or fooling you,
So that their relations may amble through.
And say! St. Peter it seems to me,
That gate isn't kept as it ought to be.
You ought to stand right by the opening there
And never sit down in that easy chair.
And say! St. Peter, my sight is dimmed,
But I don't like the way your whiskers are trim-
They're cut too wide, and outward toss; [med,
They'd look better, narrow, cut straight across.
Well! we must be going our crowns to win,
So open, St Peter, and we'll pass in."

St. Peter sat silent and stroked his staff,
But, spite of his office, he had to laugh,
Then said with a fiery gleam in his eye,
"Who's tending this gateway, you or I?"

And then he arose in his stature tall,
And pressed a button upon the wall.
And said to the imp who answered the bell:
"Escort this female around to Hell."

The man stood still as a piece of stone,
Stood sadly, gloomily there alone,
A life long settled idea he had,
That his wife was good and he was bad,
He thought if the woman went down below,
That he would certainly have to go.
That if she went to the regions dim,
There wasn't a ghost of a show for him.
Slowly he turned by habit bent,
To follow wherever the woman went.
St. Peter, standing on duty there,
Observed that the top of his head was bare.

He called the gentleman back and said,
"Friend ! how long have you been wed ?"
"Thirty years" (with a weary sigh),
And then he thoughtfully added, "Why ?"
St. Peter was silent, with head bent down,
He raised his head and scratched his crown.
Then, seeming a different thought to take,
Slowly, half to himself, he spake,
"Thirty years with that woman there !
No wonder the man hasn't got any hair,
Swearing is wicked, smoking's not good.
He smoked and swore, I should think he would.
Thirty years with that tongue so sharp,
Ho ! Angel Gabriel, give him a harp,
A jeweled harp with a golden string,
Good sir, pass in where the Angels sing,
Gabriel, give him a seat alone,
One with a cushion up near the throne,

Call up the angels to play their best,
Let him enjoy the music and rest,
See that on finest Ambrosia he feeds,
He's had about all the Hell he needs,
It is'nt hardly the thing to do
To roast him on earth and in the future too.
They gave him a harp with with golden strings,
A glittering robe and a pair of wings,
And he said as he entered the Realms of Day,
"Well, this beats cucumbers, anyway,"
And so the Scriptures had come to pass,
The last shall be first, and the first shall be last.

When I finished, my friend said,

"That was very fine, Mr. Taylor, I enjoyed that very much. You smoke good cigars too. My son is down town at the hotel looking over a line of cut glass, when he comes back, we'll take great pleasure in looking over your line."

"I'll have great pleasure in showing you, sir. By the way, I have another piece that you may find interesting."

At the end of the second piece, the son came in, and the first article they picked out was a hundred dollar brooch. I sold them a nice bill and today we are great friends.



A conductor on one of the trains down in Maine is somewhat of a humorist. There is a little junction town down there called Burnham, and he goes through the cars shouting:

"Burnham, Burnham, change here for Belfast. Do not leave your packages, umbrellas or babies in the car. Burn 'em, Burn 'em."

SOME PEOPLE WE MEET

When I started travelling— not much more than a kid—I used to carry a big heavy log on my shoulder, willing to accommodate any one looking for trouble, it gradually dwindled into a chip, and today a strong microscope could'nt find an infinitesimal speck of sawdust there.

Considering how some of us, as salesmen, worry some of the buyers, it strikes me the average customer has a great deal better temper and greater patience than the salesman who is supposed to have developed these to a marked degree.

The wonder is, not that we meet with trouble, but that we run into so little of it. The most disagreeable incident I have met with happened in a little town in N. Y. State. I was selling Ingersoll watches those days, and had'nt been on the road long enough to get out of the card carrying habit. I presented my card to a customer, who proved to be a man possessed of a very mean temperament. The first words he said were,

“Well ! the last time you were through here you sold me a bill of stem-wind watches and shipped me key-wind.”

The manner in which he said it was nasty and most offensive, and I replied,

“Well ! Mr. —— I have'nt been in your store two minutes, and you've already made two bad breaks. In the first place, I was never in this town before, in the second we have a pretty decent crowd of fellows travelling for our firm, and it's a safe bet that you got whatever you ordered.”

He replied that I was a liar, and I retorted that there was another one behind the counter, then he told me that I'd better get out. I replied,

“I came in here as a gentleman, and I'll get out when it suits my convenience. I don't like the scenery around here anyhow, and I think I will get out.”

With that I picked up my sample case and walked towards the door. As I stepped on to the sidewalk, I felt his hand touch my shoulder, a bare touch, but perhaps enough to make the clerk inside think that possibly he had helped me out. I turned around, but found he had slammed the door shut, and had his foot braced against it. I could'nt open it, so I kicked the bottom panel so hard that he thought I'd kick a hole in it, and he opened it about two inches.

I told him I'd knock his head off, and getting no response I walked away, but the farther I walked the angrier I became. I remember it was a bitterly cold day, and I was hampered with a heavy overcoat. I took it off, left that with my sample case in another store, and walked back again. He was standing behind a counter where I could'nt get at him, so I said,

“Well ! sport. you seem to think you are somewhat of a scrapper, now I don't suppose you want these show cases of yours mussed up, let's go outside and settle this little affair.”

He went out all right, but he ran up the street like a race horse, he was after a policeman, but naturally, I was missing when he returned.

One of the most peculiar remarks I have ever heard in connection with a sale was sprung on me in a little town in Alabama. As usual, I had called on the jeweler first with my watches, but he wanted to buy so small a quantity that I would'nt bother with him. I called on the druggist, hardware man, and stationer in turn, but neither of 'em seemed to like my personal appearance, so I finally went into a furniture store. When I stated my business, the furniture dealer replied,

“ You must think I'm crazy to imagine I would sell dollar watches. I sell tables and chairs.”

I came back at him with,

“Partner, you probably think I'm crazier than you are for suggesting that you sell them, but if you travelled with me for a couple of days you'd fall all over your fool self in your hurry to buy 'em.”

He listened just the proper length of time, and then said,

"Well ! you send along those three dozen watches and send 'em right away too."

"You seem to be in a hurry for them now," I replied "half an hour ago I could'nt give 'em to you."

"That's all right, old man, since you've been talking about them blamed things, I've got the belly-ache for 'em, I've just got to have 'em now."

I've seen a success made of them in every conceivable class of store, but with the bulky stuff he had I was a little doubtful as to whether he'd sell them or not, but I strongly impressed him with the fact that his success depended on the manner in which he displayed them, he had intelligence enough to do that properly, and next trip he bought a gross.

I met a corset salesman last trip who related a little incident that had just occurred in one of the small Southern towns. He had tried to interest a crusty old fossil, the proprietor of a large store with little in it.

I'll give it to you in his own words.

"The old son-of-a-gun said he would'nt take the corsets at a gift, told me he'd been in business forty years and had got along all right without my line, and guessed he could keep on getting along without 'em. I told him that if I'd been in business forty years and had no more to show for it than he had I'd never mention it to a living soul. 'Furthermore,' I said 'For all I care you can stay in business forty years longer if you want to, and I'll bet a dollar you'll never have the chance to buy these corsets again.' It took all the wind out of the old chump, he was speechless, and I walked out."



“Advice of Polonius to his son”

“This above all—to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou can’st not then be false to any man.”

—*Hamlet*.

MB 51.



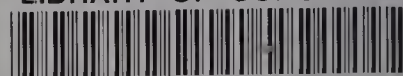


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